

The Begining of The End

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Summary: Humanity has saved their homeworld from the Covenant. They have stopped the Flood...but all this was nothing. A new plague, worse than that of the flood, has appeared, devouring everything in it's path. Can anything stop it? Or will humanity end...

1. The Begining of the End

Chapter 1

**0820 Hours, February 10, 2580 (Military Calendar) /
>Sol System, Earth, New Delphi, Iceland

"All conditions go for SkyCarrier Ground Control?" queried pilot Samuel White to control.

"Roger, all conditions go for SkyCarrier, over." Replied a technician in ground control. The SkyCarrier was a heavy transport used to carry heavy weapons and vehicles like artillery, Scorpion tanks, construction/repair vehicles, and crates of ammo and explosive ordinance. It essentially looked like an elongated Pelican dropship with a longer wingspan and Scorpion missiles in rocket pods.

"This is ground control...you and your escorts are reading green across the board. Give 'em havoc out there for us.
Over"

"Affirmative ground control, I'll bring back a little somethin' for you to remember. Over and out." The SkyCarrier's VTOL engines suddenly produced a bright orange flare, and ignited. White pushed the trust lever and rocketed into the sky, along with the SkyHawk VTOL Fighters.

Three hours of flying through the torturous snow and wind, they finally reached Bravo Base. There was a flurry of activity as marines prepped their Warthogs, Scorpions, and other vehicles for the snowy conditions. The elites checked their Ghosts, Banshees, and Wraiths if

they were battle worthy. They just got wind that the Covenant had demolished and glassed Delta Base. The Elites just hated the Covenant, plain and simple.

"Bravo Base, the cavalry has arrived. This is SkyCarrier Anaconda 316. See if you can set up a LZ for us out of the snow. Over."

"Anaconda 316, sure thing, just make sure those SkyHawk fighters are armed and ready for a fight. We'll refuel them when they get on the ground. Over." The VTOL engines whined when White was touching down. Thump

"The bird has landed. It's safe to begin unloading, over." Engineers both with and without loading suits swarmed in to begin unloading the much needed supplies and construction equipment. With the necessary equipment, Bravo Base could build SAM sites with Swallow Surface-to-Air missiles, gattling guns, and Gauss Cannons. Bravo Base would not fall.

****Ninth Age of Reclamation, Camp of Recovery / Sol System
>Earth, New Delphi, Iceland**

Tarnerus gazed over the army of the Covenant. Almost 10,000 Covenant soldiers were readying themselves for the siege. His gaze wandered over to his brutes, bundled for war and the cold weather. They were his pride and joy. Trained from a young age, they would all be worthy opponents in the battlefield. He walked down to the brutes behind his own, the pilots of the Wraiths.

"Get ready to enter the tanks, and move up onto that first ridge up there," He gestured toward the ridge. "And begin bombardment after two cycles. You will not fail me." He looked at every pilot. Each one was eager to begin. Good, he thought, the humans will not withstand such firepower...and eagerness.

****2152 Hours, February 10, 2580 (Military Calendar) /
>Sol System, Earth, New Delphi**

The pelican dropship entered Bravo Base. Corporal Hayfield flagged the dropship down with a fluorescent flare. When the dropship touched down, a myriad of heavily-armed soldiers thundered down the metal ramp. They carried something in their midst, a metal transmitter. The corporal didn't think much of this, as O.N.I. frequently sent him new-fangled contraptions that needed to be tested. Other than this, the soldiers carried out weapons, supplies, and other necessities for a long siege. However, all this was unnecessary, as the transmitter would prove to make the siege an extremely short one.

2. The Assault on Bravo Base

****Chapter
2****

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****0500 Hours, February 11, 2580 (Military Calendar) /**

>Sol System, Earth, New Delphi

There was chaos outside of the fortress walls. Human marines and Covenant Jackals, Brutes, and Buzzers traded shots, and casualties mounted. There were screams of pain as soldiers felt the superheated plasma shots burn through their shirts and armor, touching the raw skin beneath. For every Human soldier that fell, five Covenant soldiers fell as well. However, for every enemy soldier slain, two more seemed to take it's place. Soldiers who were shouting orders could barely be heard over the whine of overheated plasma weapons, the staccato of automatic weapons fire, sniper rifle shots, the sounds of a rocket being launched, the sizzle as an energy mortar hit the concrete, steel, and snow. The constant volley of weapons fire seemed to tear the very fabric of time, slowing everything down, as well as casting an eerie glow around them. Explosions thundered everywhere. Screams, taunts, complaints, they were all there in the night.

As SkyHawks streamed past, white streaks of missiles lunged straight into the Covenant Horde. The Covenant, undaunted, launched a new attack at the gates. The solid steel gates groaned and screeched as the horde launched volleys of plasma and energy mortars at them. Some of the sniper nests which also had guys with rockets, launched a counter-attack at the wraiths. A Wraith stopped firing and took aim at the nest. The soldiers jumped off moments before the nest became a torch in the night.

Corporal Hayfield aimed the rocket launcher at a Wrath that didn't particularly want to be attacked, and let fly one round. Its aim was straight and true. It hit the vehicle with an explosion like that of a thunderclap. The resulting sound was so loud that many of the soldiers near the explosion stopped and turned around. In that momentary lapse of attention, the Soldiers and vehicles on the wall took aim and fired a barrage of fire, projectiles, and plasma that hit that area like a well-aimed punch at an opponents exposed flank. That whole area lit up like a Christmas Tree in the night, and everything was turned to ash. The Covenant tried to rush soldiers in, but as the dropships neared the Covenant LZ, hidden Anti-Aircraft missile sites rose up and launched salvos of missiles toward the incoming dropships, each one dropping out of the sky or exploding in a black cloud of fire and shrapnel.

Suddenly, a portal of a red color opened up in the sky, and a huge ship emerged. It had a vague shape of a hammer with two cylinders in the middle, and engines in the back. As soon as this new ship came out, the AA missile sites automatically aimed and fired at this new thing in the sky. The missiles had barely exited halfway out of the launch tube when they exploded, by some mysterious force, leaving behind twisted metal and blackened dirt, which had originally been a missile site. As the smoke cleared, dozens of organic and slimy-looking pods fell down from the ship, as well as metallic pods, and landed near the covenant base. The Covenant have been taking advantage of this momentary lapse of attention caused by the ship to regroup and charge again at the human camp. They didn't get far, as the pods burst open to reveal slightly slug-like creatures, with daggers for hands, and a shield-like carapace on its head. As Covenant soldiers turned to deal with this new enemy, the creatures began to fling spines and acid at the covenant. Impaling many of the unshielded soldiers, the covenant aimed at anything around them. As pods headed to Bravo Base, the marines screamed and fired at these

Pods. They successfully managed to shoot down half of them, but they kept coming. The Corporal looked around quickly, as the whole base started to run into disarray.

"Everyone! Grab what you can, we're evacuating this base! We'll be overrun! Load up a vehicle and head toward the science outpost, maybe we can warn them and help them defend themselves." As the marines did what they were told, some kind of elephant-like thing came through the portal, with dozens of others just like it. They seemed to be giant heading for the covenant base, where the aliens there had secured a foothold.

"This is Hayfield, can anyone read me? I repeat, can anyone hear me? We are under assault by some type of alien creature. They have decimated the Covenant siege force! We are currently evacuating, but be warned, a MAC station will most likely be disabled. I know you need it, but we can't hold this position. We will fall back to the science research station and hole up there. We'll be able to protect them if the aliens follow us to the station. Can anyone hear me?"

"Corporal Hayfield, this is Major Lee. We'll send some reinforcements and medical staff. If you guys don't make it out, we'll have to nuke the site. Do you copy?"

"Major, I copy. Thanks for the help."

"Hey, you need all the help you can get."

3. The ProblemAnother one

****Chapter 3****

****0923 Hours, February 11, 2580 (Military Calendar) /
>Sol System, In Orbit of Mars**

The U.N.S.C. Cobra was a marvel of the fleet. Heavily armed with over 1500 Archer missiles, two EA (Electro-magnetic Accelerator) Cannons, more than fifty small electro-magnetic rail-guns, and dozens of fighters, this gigantic ship was over 1567m long. Crewed with humanities best and brightest, with SPARTANS on board as well, this ship was sent to do some of the hardest missions available. Mitchell 316 sighed as the last status report streamed in from Alpha team on Earth. From the recorders, there was a lot of action. He longed to be down there with everybody else. He was the COMM. officer on the bridge. At least he had just experienced a space battle, albeit a small one compared to those at REACH and Sigma Octanis.

As he gazed into the inky blackness and wreckage of ships, his console started beeping urgently. Almost immediately, Mitchell jerked out of the inky darkness and back into reality. It was a distress message from Alpha team.

"Captain! I'm receiving a distress call from Alpha team!"

"Patch it through, Mitchell 316."

"Captain Nathan, this is Hewitt 639. We are currently in retreat. Some ship just came through a portal and is dropping pods with alien

freaks in them. I'm with Fire team Delta to try and slow the aliens down. Ohâ€|noâ€| sir, they're catching up to us, we need some help down here," his next few words were drowned out by the screams of marines, and the staccato of assault rifles blasting away at the aliens.

"The aliens just slaughtered Fire team Delta! Oh no! Get back, get back! schlock AUGH! Captainâ€|I'm hurt. You'd better send someâ€|help soon. I don't think we can slow them down much longer. I am with Nathaniel 730 and Sean 295. Please make sure that everyone else gets there safely... What in the name ofâ€|"Alert. Abrupt severance of communication relay. Missing signalâ€|K.I.A.? M.I.A.? W.I.A.?"

There was nothing but silence on the bridge. Slowly, the captain reached for the P.A. system on the ship.

"Attention crew, we have just lost communication from our defense team on Earth. I suspect that something must've happened to them. We will drop some recon teams down to the base. Be warned, something drove them out, and is more than likely to be still there. All mechanics, see if you can get some of those pelicans to have extra armor. I'll also need some medics, no more than twenty, and three marine fire teams. Get going. This is the captain, signing out."

****D +03:36:28 (SPARTAN-316 Mission Clock)/ ****

****Pelican Victor 528, En route to New Delphi support camp****

Mitchell felt at home in his new MJOLNIR armor. He was sitting with some marines in a pelican dropship. He closed his eyes, hoping that John and the others were safe. He wondered what was waiting for them, and if there was anyone still there.

"Hey guys. We'll be landing in ten minutes, so make sureâ€|whoa!" the pilot suddenly jerked the pelican to dodge something, "Marines, I'm dodging some flying things, they seem to be trying to crash into meâ€|ugh, it's hard to shake those buggers. Whoa! They're coming at me from everywhere!" After about three minutes of continuous dodging and jerking, it appeared that the pilot managed to dodge every one of those flying things.

"Hey kids, I think that's the last ofâ€|AUGH!"

The announcement was suddenly cut short as the cockpit shattered into dozens of tiny pieces of debris. As the dropship veered out of control, a smart-aleck marine cried, "WE'RE ALL GOING TO DIE!" and started to whimper. Mitchell was about to shout at him, when another pelican, also without a cockpit, whammed into them. The two pilot-less pelicans dropped like a stone through the air. The last thing Mitchell remembered before blacking out was seeing a bright flash and a crunching noise.

4. The Betgora Core

****Chapter 4****

****D +08:27:48 (SPARTAN-316 Mission Clock)/ ****

****Pelican Victor 528 crash site, unknown coordinates****

Mitchell shook his head. He tried to move his arm, and it stung. He opened his eyes and took a ragged breath. He tasted copper. Mitchell looked around. He was still sitting in the pelican, or what remained of it, anyway. He grabbed hold of the wreckage and took a tentative step forward. It hurt, but he was able to walk. Besides, the pain kept him alert. Walking around the crash site, he salvaged what weapons and ammo he could find and consulted his HUD's topographic map. His suit received the map data and provided a holographic map. Although he couldn't find his precise location, he found the general location he was in and in which direction the base was.

A few meters from his position, he found a working snow-tread equipped all terrain Warthog. As he headed closer, another MJOLNIR-equipped titan and a fatigue-wearing marine moved. He rushed over, whispering, "Are you ok?" Both of them whispered that they were.

"Can you stand? I'll try to get that Warthog up so we can get going." he asked. "Alright" they both replied. They took some of the spare weapons Mitchell found. As they searched the wreckage, they found medical kits and food rations, which they strapped onto the Warthog. Equipped with weapons, they walked toward the Warthog, and took their respective places on the turret and the passenger seat. And with that, they sped off into the snowfield.

****Ninth Age of Reclamation, Camp of Recovery / Sol System
>Earth, New Delphi, Iceland**

Running for his life, Aned 'Risolee tripped over a snow bank. He was held prisoner by those traitorous Brutes. Before being caught by the Brutes, he was a blue-armored engineer, which meant that he was of a minor rank, working on an experimental shield for the humans, "Bravo Base". As the new aliens that landed ripped apart the ranks of the Covenant invasion force, the brutes guarding him were knocked unconscious by a stray plasma grenade. Set free, he jumped into the nearest hole created by a fuel rod gun, he made his way into the snow drift. He managed to steal a Brute Plasma Rifle while escaping, which was now strapped at his side.

Hearing a roar of the all-too familiar Ghost hovercraft, Aned 'Risolee stood up and ran for the Ghost, which was piloted by a brute. Grabbing onto the back fin, he punched the Brute's head until he fell off the Ghost, which Aned then hijacked and rode off following two warthog tracks, which were made by the Warthog that Mitchell was in.

****D +09:13:27 (SPARTAN-316 Mission Clock)/ ****

****En route to Pelican Charlie 463, unknown coordinates****

Mitchell floored the warthog to where he thought the crash was.

"Stupid snow, can't see a single thing." Luke, the other SPARTAN, turned so he's facing Mitchell.

"Mitchell, stow the belly-aching. Just be thankful that we're alive."

"Oh be quiet Luke, stop blabbing. Be thankful that we didn't get stuck with that loud-mouthed marine." replied Mitchell.

"Umâ€¦I'm right here."

"Ohâ€¦" "Watch out!" screamed the marine. A Hydralisk unburied itself from the frozen tundra, and was almost run over by the warthog. It got hit and was knocked out. "What is that?" whispered the marine.

"My guess, the same thing that attacked bravo base." theorized Mitchell, "And they're everywhere." Luke got out of the passenger's seat and went down to the creature they hit.

"I think the egg-heads at O.N.I. are going to like this one. I never saw it before. Who's going to tie it up though?" inquired Luke. The unified response was, "Not it!"

"Aw come on, I have to tie it myself? Fine." After a few minutes, the creature was hog-tied and left in back with the marine, who felt that he had gotten the worse position of the three.

After an hour of driving, he could see a faint shape on the horizon. It appeared to be gray, and had smoke trailing from it. As they drew nearer, they saw a flare go up into the evening sky. As they neared, they could hear the cheers as they saw the small trio of survivors. They parked the Warthog to the left of the Pelican's "tail", and got out.

"Hey Mitch, you got a working radio in that thing? Our Warthog is nothing but rubble" The marine pointed to the smoking wreckage a couple feet away.

"By the way, my name's Sergeant Ryan Ashcroft, commanding officer of the survivors. We hope to contact our eggheads at the Arctic Research Station, or A.R.S. for short." informed the marine, "I have reason to believe that the surviving marines from Bravo Base went there."

"I'll check the radio, Sergeant, while you organize the supplies. We have to be ready for anything."

"Affirmative, Mitch, I'll get right on it." confirmed Ryan, and he left to rally the supplies. Mitchell, on the other hand, got back in the Warthog. Taking a quick glance at the matte-black console and radio, he took a quick preliminary glance. _No obvious physical damage, I'll try it, _Mitchell thought. Pressing the "ON" button, he ran a diagnostic on the COMM. relay. Hearing a crackle from the speakers, he grabbed the mike and searched for the frequency the UNSC Cobra used. Finally identifying the elusive frequency, he contacted the cruiser.

"Captain Nathan? Can you hear me? This is Mitchell 316. Does anyone copy?"

"Affirmative, Mitchell, good to hear from you. How are you doing?"

"Not good, the pelicans Victor 528 and Charlie 463 that my team and another squad rode on have been disabled by some new suicide units

from those aliens Bravo Base encountered. We ran over a different type of alien on the way to the pelican Charlie 463 crash site. We tied it up for those scientists at the A.R.S. and O.N.I.. How's it going up their?"

"Well, not much happened since you left, but we'll keep our heads alertâ€|what the, I have to contact you. Something just left slipspace. Nathan out."

Placing the COMM. on the receiver, wondered what could've happened. _Beepâ€|beep _insistently rang his suit's com system. NEW MESSAGE FROM A.R.S.. (URGENT) Mitchell chinned the message and read the message.

****Arctic Research Station (Alpha)****

>Date: 12 February 2580 (Military Calendar)

>Encryption Code: Red

>Public Key: file/ Betgora Core

****From:**** (AI) Juno, Assistant of Dr. Alexander Smith

****To:**** SPARTAN-316, COMM. officer on the UNSC Cobra

****Subject:**** Recent Discoveries Report

/open file/

/Begin Message/

Hello, Dr. Smith has gotten into a bit of trouble. The senile old man has discovered an object. Judging by Cortana's Forerunner language translation, the writing around the object states, "Bow down, Reclaimer, for this is the Betgora Core. All who see it will face the judgment of the Forerunner, and find if they are worthy of the quest to reunite it with the Ark." Before we could secure the area, the A.R.S. recalled him back to begin evacuating the area. I'm staying behind at the dig site to keep watch. I hope that you can get over here soon. I don't think that the A.R.S. called him back to make sure that they're safe. See if you can bring some marines too. I'm also sending you the coordinates of this site.

-Juno (AI)

Press ENTER to view linked attachments.

/End Message/

/close file/

Mitchell pondered what the message on the object meant. As his thought's drifted away, the sudden shout of a marine pulled him from his little world of thought.

"What theâ€|Marines! I just got a message from HighCom saying that bogies are approaching from the south. Get ready, we might be in for a fight, though not for another hour or two. Mechanics, see if you can get the pelican up and running. I ran a diagnostic and found that it was in good shape." ordered Sergeant Ashcroft, "We'll try to avoid combat if we can, since we're don't have much salvageable ammo." One

of the mechanics cried, "Yes sir!"

"Mitchell, if you have any ideas, I'd like to hear them. I don't know how long the pelican will take to get airborne, so we probably need a diversion."

"Don't worry sergeant, I know just the thing. Do you have any flares and rocket launchers?"

"Yeah, why?"

"I'm going to divert them to thinking we're somewhere else, hoping for help."

"I sure hope it works, Mitch, or else we're all toast."

5. Aliens from Hell?

Chapter 5

**1923 Hours, February 12, 2580 (Military Calendar) /
>Pelican Charlie 463

Junior Mechanic Lee Anderson looked over the pelican's console circuit boards. Though suffering minor damage, it appeared to be still operational. Closing the covers, Lee prepared to start the engines. Clickâ€¦clickâ€¦FWOOSH went the VTOL engines of the pelican.

"Sergeant? The pelican works. If you want to evac now, it's the time to do so."

"Alright, Lee, well done. Get the pelican ready for launch now."

"Yes sir." Lee rushed to the vehicle attachment. It had to be able to hold onto their Warthog for the journey. He was distracted as a loud roar of a Ghost hovercraft came into view. Upon hearing the clicks of weapons being locked in place, the junior mechanic activated his binoculars and identified the pilot.

"Sergeant, that'sâ€¦an elite! Tell the marines to hold their fire!"

"Mechanic?"

"I'm sure sir, just do it."

"Alright. you heard the man, stow those weapons."

The Ghost sped closer to the downed dropship. As it grew closer, the marines saw that they would've lost a valuable partner in fixing the dropship. Stopping on the other side of the dropship, the elite mechanic got out.

"Aned? Is that you?"

"Lee? I managed to escape from those brutes. Nasty beasts, don't you think?"

"Aned, it is you! Can you help? Our bird suffered some damage en route to reinforce the survivors of Bravo Base."

Just as Lee finished his sentence, Sergeant Ashcroft walked over and asked,

"Lee, how do you know him?"

"Sergeant, he used to work on the advanced experimental shield with me. He volunteered to make sure that our main research was deleted and the Covenant couldn't get to the shield advances."

"I'm pretty sure that having a shield would be a better choice for the Pelican, as we can have some defense before the Pelican's Titanium A hull starts to take hits."

"Ho-rah, Sergeant, and don't worry. We can get started now."

Time flew as the pair fixed the pelican and rigged a shield for the pelican. By the time everything was done, they saw a flare in the distance. Remembering that it could be Spartan-316's mission, he ignored it and prepped the flight controls.

"Sir, it's up and ready. Tell your marines to get inside and saddle up. We're leaving for the A.R.S. as soon as everyone gets in."

"Alright, just wait for Mitchell."

Almost as if to respond to the sergeant's comment, they heard a roar as the Warthog Mitchell took drew near.

"Sergeant, I succeed. They were drawn away. Hope I'm not too late."

"No, Mitchell, you're right on time."

****2156 Hours, February 12, 2580 (Military Calendar) /
>En Route to Artic Research Station**

"Pelican Charlie 463â€| static â€|is the A.R.S. Can youâ€| static â€|in preparing us for theâ€| static â€|ault? Please, respond!" Came a rough and desperate voice from the COMM. speakers.

"Attention A.R.S., affirmative, we are coming in to help. What's going on?"

"Thank goodness! We're under siege by the alien forces. Survivors from Bravo Base have made it in. We set up steel barricades and mines, but need experts on shield equipment! We can'tâ€|" the voice was cut off as a large explosion sounded near by, followed by screams and several subsequent explosions. "â€|hold on much longer, as you can tell! Please hurry!"

"Affirmative, Pelican Charlie 463 out."

"Sergeant, I'm worried that we may get shot down before entering. Should we be worried?"

"No, Lee. Solid Titanium A is the only thing along this hull, other than the shield. To pierce it, you would need an energy pulse equivalent to that of a Scarab-Mining digger. Head straight in."

Lee throttled the dropship through the cloud of smoke caused by flaming wreckage on the snow below. Eyeing the lights of the station, the sky in front of him was suddenly full of green translucent material and spines. Every time something hit the shield, it flared and quickly cleared again. Throttling and dodging most of the spines, he managed to get close enough to see the landing personnel on the landing pads. Waving them in, Lee guided the pelican straight down. Landing with a bump, Lee looked into the cabin and reported in an amusing manner, "Well, we're landed. Please move out in an orderly fashion and prepare to kick some alien behinds."

"Hoo-rah!"

As Mitchell stepped out, a marine, a sergeant, walked closer and asked, "Could you and the other SPARTAN come and follow me a minute?"

"Yes Sir."

Mitchell motioned for Luke to follow. As they walked into the building, they could feel the tremors of distant explosions. As they continued, they could see wounded marines and dirt covered faces. They entered a room filled with weapons, they could see other SPARTANS repairing their armor. The sergeant led them to a rack with two unidentifiable weapons. The sergeant picked up the weapon closest to them. It was approximately one foot and eight inches, blue lines along it's body, and one-inch long slugs which were about half-inch wide, and looked rather like a battle rifle, though with a longer stock and a wider muzzle opening.

"This is a S-LRG-32, short for Shrapnel-Launching Rail Gun. Upon firing, a electro-magnetic current follows along the sides, firing a shrapnel-filled pellet with a impact-activated explosive charge contained inside almost to the speed of light, kind of like a MAC gun on starships. Upon impact, the explosives inside will explode, launching shrapnel everywhere. Although you'll be able to customize the slug, the gun is powerful no matter what you use."

After this explanation, Luke immediately grabbed it and modified it to his liking. The Sergeant continued. Lifting the second gun, he held it up into the light. It was a foot and a half of pure terror and awe. It was the shape of the original M60 Assault Rifle, a good favorite among veterans, green-highlighted lines all around the weapon. Attached to the muzzle area was a exchangeable flashlight. On top of the area with the battery life, there was a scope, with 5x and 10x zoom capacity.

"This weapon is the AP-PAW 360. Designed after the M60 retired and the Battle Rifle started to grow too old, we designed the weapon to work like the battle rifle and able to zoom in, it also can be switched between being a bullet hose and a single-round shot. We also had in mind the benefits of having plasma-based weaponry. The only drawback of the original Plasma Rifle was that it overheated too often. We erased that problem with the lines you see. They capture the heat and use it to recharge the heat activated charger. Very efficient." The Sergeant handed it to Mitchell.

Mitchell accepted the weapon and turned to Luke.

"You want to kick some alien butt?" jokingly asked Mitchell.

"Yeah, and also to try out our new toys!"

As they started to walk out, they saw that the SPARTANS in the room had got up to follow them. They all already had their weapons.

"Alright, let's move out!"

The team ran out and onto the walls. They had not gotten there a moment too late. The aliens had already gotten to about a meter of the first barricade and were in the process of weakening the solid steel and titanium wall. As Mitchell fired his new weapon, the blue glow of plasma erupted from the tip of the gun. In a second the plasma had reached to an alien and burned into its body, causing it to scream in pain. Switching it to fully automatic, he sprayed the area with blue fire. After only two minutes, the area of three-square feet emptied of any live aliens, and was covered in red goo. He had no sooner cleared the area, when it filled up again with more aliens. As he fired, he thought, this is going to take a long time.

6. The Beast

****Chapter 6****

****2156 Hours, February 12, 2580 (Military Calendar) /****

****Sol System, In Orbit Around Earth****

The UNSC Cobra was the only ship in the orbit of Earth when something exited slipspace from behind the moon. Sending two remote drones, Captain Nathan wondered what it could be.

"Receiving live video feed from Alpha and Beta Droneâ€¦what theâ€¦?" Sir, you should take a look at this." reported the officer manning the sensors station.

"Pipe it through the main screen, lieutenant." Captain Nathan responded. The video stream blinked on. It showed an extremely old ship, roughly the size of a small frigate, though not of any known Human or Covenant design. It was rusted in several places, and had many cracks and dents.

"Gaia, what am I precisely looking at?" Gaia, their AI, appeared on the pedestal next to the view screen.

"It appears to be the experimental frigate, 'The Trivet', which lost while moving through slipspace. It appears that the ship was attacked by something, and then disappeared. Maybe we should call FleetCOM to let them know in case something happens."

"Good idea, we should request that all orbital MAC cannons lock on in case it's a ship controlled by a dangerous alien. Lieutenant, signal FleetCOM and request what we had just discussed."

"Sir, yes sir!"

The captain sighed. With a forlorn look, he thought, _First Bravo Base is attacked, then our reinforcements get ambushed, and now this? What in the world is going on?_

****1030 Hours, February 12, 2580 (Military Calendar) /****

****Sol System, Orbiting the Moon****

Ado 056 stared at the gigantic ship. It was his first mission ever since he received the Mjolnir Mark VII armor. He sighed. He remembered stories that he was told when he was little. Stories about the U.E.S.C. Marathon, and how one marine fought the hordes of alien Pfhors. This reminded him of those stories, only he'll be going with dozens of soldiers, and not just one person. His gaze wandered over to the few other Spartans and marines. His best friend, Nicolas 128, walked over.

"Wow, just look at it. It's hard to believe that it's so old. It looks as if it's large enough to be a weapons module or a frigate."

"Yeah, Nick. It's hard to believe." Then they both fell silent.

"Suit up soldiers! We're latching on in three minutes." yelled a gruff tan-skinned sergeant, "And don't let your guard down!"

"Spartans, I'll split the team up. 056, 128, and 364, you're yellow team. 156, 285, and 086, you're green team. Finally, Jeffery, Isaac, and I will make up blue team. The rest of you will be red team! If you have any trouble, shout it over the comm. channels. Over and out." prepped the Andrew 158. Number 364 ran over to Nick and Ado.

"Hi, my names Todd 364. Hope we see some action!"

"So do we, Todd, so do we."

****1054 Hours, February 12, 2580 (Military Calendar) /****

****Sol System, Orbiting the Moon****

The three minutes seemed like hours. When they finally latched on, there was a metallic CLANG and the blast doors opened. The sergeant peeped out, signaling that there were no enemies, waved for the other soldiers in. They ran out.

"Alright, Blue team, head toward the engines. See if it's still operational. Yellow team, head to the hangar. Maybe there's some tech left over from when this lump of steel was built. Green team! Head toward the bridge. You'll be accompanied by some marines. Remember, this is to scout the ship; by no means should you destroy something unless it's attacking you. Everyone clear?" asked the same tan-skinned sergeant. Everyone flashed their acknowledge lights. "Good. MOVE OUT!"

Green team walked through the empty halls, their footsteps clanging

off the metallic tiles. Suddenly, their flashlights on their battle rifles landed on a disturbingly clean skeleton of what was presumably human.

"What theâ€¦look what's on it! It's armor very similar to ours! This must be a precursor!"

"Nick, you know what you could do, shut up. It would be great." And with that, they continued toward the bridge. The three Spartans rounded a corner and ran into a horde of aliens. Behind them, they could see tubes of some sort with possibly human occupants. One of the aliens roared with fury and fired some-sort of energy cannon at them. The Spartans nimbly dodged it, but some marines behind them weren't so lucky. They were incinerated in the blast with no time to scream. As soon as the Spartans dodged it, they started firing their battle rifles, but as soon as the alien died, the other ones behind them also started to fire.

"This is Green team. We have encountered some-sort of alien that remained on the derelict ship. Unghâ€¦be careful! They fire something similar to covenant plasma, only much more powerful. I was hit and I can tell you it hurts...a lot. We are requesting support. Much of our marine support has been vaporized. I repeat, this is green team, we need back up! Does anyone read me!"

"Green team, this is Yellow team. We read you. Hold you position, we'll come toward you. And I think you better take all weapons they drop, they might become useful."

"Affirmative, Yellow team. We'll wait," replied Green 056. "Green team, find a hole that you can defend from, but it can't be too far from this area. See if you can take them out." He gestured to the aliens.

****D +00:58:53 hours (yellow team mission clock) /****

****Aboard unidentified vessel, heading towards hangar****

As Yellow one moved down the hallway, something scurried to his left. Bringing his gun to bear, he signaled for everyone else to stop and find cover. He moved closer and closer to the source of the noise. Out of the dark, a creature roughly the size of his thigh jumped at his throat. He tried to shoot it, but it was too fast. It clamped its mouth into his neck and wouldn't let go. Struggling to pull it off, he tried to shout, but couldn't do a thing. His teammates, the rest of yellow team, stood helpless, unable to shoot the creature without hitting Yellow one. He felt the creature stick a needle-like tongue into his suit, penetrating the material, and injected something into the blood stream. White-hot pain lanced through his whole body, pain like he had never experienced, not even when he lost his left arm, he did the only thing he could do. He screamed a scream no one would ever hear, even to those close to him. As the life left him, he looked at his friend, his continuous companion, Yellow Two, more formally known as Lieutenant Major Sarah Nelson. With her in sight, Yellow one, Private Zach Wakowski, left the physical world.

Watching Yellow One writhe in pain and not being able to do anything was the worst feeling of her life. She closed her eyes, hoping that this was all a dream. She tried to stop crying. _Marines don't cry, marines don't cry, _she thought as she struggled to control her

emotions. Suddenly, a single gunshot rang out in the empty hallways. The creature fell dead on the floor, followed by Yellow One. As Yellow One's body fell, for her, it fell slowly, almost as if reminding her that her friend was dead, and she couldn't do a thing. She felt a hand on her shoulder, reminding her that they had to keep going.

"Sorry I had to do that Sarah, but I had to. It could've hurt other people."

"I understand, thanks."

Standing up, she sadly marked Yellow one KIA. It seemed ironic that he died shortly after meeting her. Unfortunately, no one will ever remember who he was. _I will never forget him, never._

Yellow Two stood up as a message rang through their COMM. systems. Green team was in trouble.

"Green team! This is Yellow team. We read you. Hold you position, we'll come toward you. And I think you better take all weapons they drop, they might become useful." As the answer crackled back, Yellow Two motioned for everyone to head over to Green team.

"Team, I guess our mission will have to be scrubbed. Let's go." Silently, everyone backtracked and headed for Green Team.

****1054 Hours, February 12, 2580 (Military Calendar) /****

****Sol System, Orbiting the Moon****

"Uh-hâ€|Captain? I'm reading an energy pulse in the ship's engines. It appears to have some biological systems in them. Should we check with Blue Team? They should be there by now."

"Yes, do it."

"Blue team, I'm reading a biological signal in your area, are you sure it's clear of life-forms?"

"Yes, the signal must've been from our analysis equipment. We found a layer of some organic substance, quite possibly aâ€|wait. It'sâ€|coming alive! I don't understandâ€|thisâ€|shouldn't have happened! AHHHHH!" The message was suddenly filled with the screams of blue team, "It's taking control of my team! Itâ€|it's spreadingâ€|Get everyone off this ship! NOW! Tell all teams to get off. Do NOT send reinforcements. I repeat, do not come close! AhhhhhhAHHHHHH-AUGH!"

"Blue team, BLUE TEAM! I've lost them, captain."

"Lieutenant, tell all the other teams, now!"

"Yes, sir."

"All teams, abort mission, I repeat, abort mission! Something is loose and it's taking control of the ship. It just wiped out blue team! Get out now!"

"Captain, this is mission control. We'll need at least five minutes

to get out. We have to get outâ€|what theâ€|marine, get back! Get back! Oh myâ€| AHhhhhhHHH!static"

"Mission command, do you read me? Please respond!"

What spoke next horrified them to the core. It was as alien as the different species of the Covenant, and as chilling as the screams of dying marines. It simply stated, "We liveâ€|"

The bridge crew was shocked as the message finished. In the silence, a rumbling of engines told them that two of intercept ships and a research ship had rumbled next to them.

"Attention ships, we have just lost contact with the boarding team. Be advised, the ship is housing potentially harmful aliens. Stay at maximum range to carry out you orders." He barely finished his sentence when a vivid red plasma beam lanced through the dark vacuum. It impacted with the closest ship, the research ship UNSC Inquisitor. It suddenly spun out of control, and the comm. was filled with the screams, curses, and shouts of despair as the beam coated the ship with the same pink bio-layer on the ship they had found. The two other ships, the Inquisitor's escort, immediately fired two MAC rounds at the ship, creating two long gashes in the derelict's hull.

"Sir, I'm picking up signs that the thing on the ship is dying, but the engines are failing! It's heading straight for Earth!"

"What? The MAC rounds didn't destroy the ship?"

"No, Captainâ€|SIR! The infected ship is turning toward us, and it's preparing to fire!"

The infected research ship suddenly shot out three red beams identical to the original plasma beams. Each one hit the three ships, creating the same bio-layer when it hit. As each ship fell, they all drifted out of control, but then righted up again. The whole crew was screaming, the captain himself was tearing at his thoughts, trying to keep a hold of them, but to no avail. Unfortunately, the crew and captain like the crew of the other ships, fell victim to this new plague in the system.

7. The End?

**Chapter
7**

0536 Hours, February 13, 2580 (Military Calendar) /

New Delphi, Artic Research Station, Iceland

As dawn broke through the smoke-filled sky, Mitchell could see the full extent of the damage and casualties. He saw hunter-seeker groups, as they screened the field for any remnants of the invading aliens. He watched as some engineers squabbled over how to repair the base, scientists dissected the aliens, and mechanics repaired some

ships. They had nearly recovered all of the bodies, some ravaged beyond physical identification by the acid. With his amplified hearing, something caught his attention from all this action. A faint roar sounded above him, and he looked. A bright fireball was burning a gash in the early morning sky. It hurtled toward the ground with amazing speed. It hit the ground, roughly some seventy miles away, behind a mountain range. Suddenly, a roar, as loud as a thunderclap, rumbled across the blood-stained, snow-topped field, penetrating every nook and cranny and stuffing it's self into one's ear.

The loud roar was soon followed by the largest mushroom-shaped cloud he had ever seen, exactly like the explosions that he saw in old videos of the 20th century, when they had experimented with nuclear weapons. The cloud seemed to reach up straight into the heavens, laced with traces of pink and crimson, as well as metallic-grey. A shockwave streamed in from the impact site, and pummeled the temporary shield they had set up, and vaporized and wreckage or bodies outside of the shield. They simply vanished in little tiny wisps of dust.

As soon as it began, it ended. The struggling shield's tension was alleviated in multi-colored rainbows in the thin film of a shield. The soldiers unplugged their ears, and listened to the silence. A sudden hush, like that of the absolute silence in space, appeared, like that of when you know that you're doomed to die. Minutes went by, then hours, andâ€¦nothing happened. Mitchell continued to ponder as the rest of the camp slowly returned to their work. As time went on, a scientist had walked up onto the bulkhead and stopped next to Mitchell.

"Excuse me, but I believe that my AI had sent you a message," casually mentioned the scientist. "My name is Dr. Alexander Smith. I believe that you know about the oracle, am I right?"

"Huh? Yes, doctor. I was just thinking about it. So I guess that you want me to go to the site with you?"

"Yes, an archaeological find like that is astounding. As much as that we learned about the ark, and , wellâ€¦we would just like to find where it is. If there had ever been a time we need to have a haven, it's now. With the assaults, the invasions, and rebellions, it's amazing that we aren't dead yet."

"When should we leave?"

"Right now, I don't want keep my AI waiting."

"It's still functional?"

"Yes, I made sure that there was enough shielding around the work site to ward off a direct blast from any EMP-generating object. I'm pretty sure that it's still safe."

"Alright, I'll go. We'll take the Warthog."

Minutes later, the scientist found him in the driver's side cabin, holding on for his life. They sped across the wide open plain, enjoying their freedom. Off in the distance, unknown to the pair, an alien watched them. It was roughly five foot, two inches. As it dropped its binoculars, a pair of glowing red eyes was visible in its

gaunt, skull-like face.

"So, doctor. I have found you. Now I shall keep you from leading humanity to its haven. For everything you have done, you will payâ€|ten times worse."

**1106 Hours, February 13, 2580 (Military Calendar)
/**

Archaeological Dig-site, Sector 9-A, Iceland

"Ah, hello Dr. Smith, I'm very glad that you're here. I had instructed for some of AI's in the equipment to begin deep scans of the object andâ€|waitâ€|I'm detecting an energy spike as soon as the spartan walked in. It's emanating from the object!" As the AI finished speaking, an orange glow, almost like smoke, drifted out from the hole. As it drifted closer and closer to Mitchell, its glow intensified, until it was so bright nothing could be seen. Mitchell had never encountered anything like this. His Mjolnir suit couldn't compensate for the glow. It was so bright, that he had to close his eyes and thenâ€|the glow disappeared.

He opened his eyes. He could tell that he was somewhere else, because there were trees, grass, and some ruins some distance to the left of him. His suit was gone, leaving only his Com-set, and his weapon. He picked up his weapon and stood up. He glanced around, finally walking only when he got a good look of his original position. No one else was around, when suddenly a probe, much like that of 343 Guilty Spark, and 2401 Penitent Tangent, recorded by the Master Chief's encounters, appeared. It hummed with an almost human quality to it, as it glowed orange and floated around, as if waiting for something.

"Oh, hello, I am 807 Sentient Keeper, monitor of the Ark. I am here to test you, to see if you will be the one to lead the Forerunner's descendants out of danger and to the Ark. The first test will be a test of patience and determination. You will have to retrieve the orb at the top of this course. There are a number of levels, which makes you have to jump, climb, and run, all the way to the top. Keep in mind, you will be timed." As the monitor was speaking, a number of blocks floated up into the air, creating a three-dimensional maze of platforms, ladders, and other things needed in a maze.

"I will release traps to test your alertness. There will be pits filled with acid. This acid is not dangerous, merely acting more like a tickle than a burning sensation associated with acid. You will be allowed to use any means necessary to complete this test. You will begin in five seconds." Running, he made his way to the starting platform, which rose him up.

"You will have ten minutes to finish the test." _Just ten minutes? Way too long, _thought Mitchell, _I'll be finished long before that._ He progressed his way through the 10 kilometers that made up the course, running whenever he could. Throughout the course, traps would spring when he least expected it. As he ran he noticed that there was more than one thing watching him. It was almost as if he was a completer at a global event. Suddenly, there was a sudden hum next to him. There, floating in the sky was a gigantic Enforcer. Tracking the human, the Enforcer suddenly fired pink projectiles. Mitchell ran, maneuvering around to avoid the projectiles. Quickly glancing at his

mission timer, he realized that he had to hurry. As it counted down, he ran he looked for ways of outsmarting the machine.

3:31

He saw his opportunity, a large pillar close to the machine. Standing near it, just long enough for the machine to target and fire, Mitchell waited.

2:43

As soon as he saw the pink projectiles close in, he ran toward the final leg of the course. Closing in on the gap between him and the blue orb, he heard an explosion as the machine exploded in a ball of fire.

1:48

Knowing that the foremost danger was gone, he ran with renewed strength and sprinted straight past all the remaining traps, and grabbed the orb.

0:34â€|timer stopâ€|mission completeâ€|

As he finished, the Sentient Keeper floated up and stated simply, "Well done." Reaching for the monitor, Mitchell was surrounded by the same orange light as before near the Betgora Oracle.

**1232 Hours, February 13, 2580 (Military Calendar)
/**

Archaeological Dig-site, Sector 9-A, Iceland

He suddenly reappeared in the arctic archaeological site. As he reappeared, the doctor ran toward him, asking different questions. Mitchell could barely answer one question without suddenly being interrupted. Unknown to them, Juno was monitoring the oracle, when she detected another AIâ€|in the oracle!

"Doctor, I'm detecting another AI residing within the object. I suspect that it will activate when the 'tests', as mentioned in the inscriptions, are completed." reported Juno; "It seems to be activating some sort of holographic panel on the object. It should be appearing in a few minutesâ€|" After a few minutes, the object showed a scratchy green mist above a flat screen on the object. As time elapsed, a ghostly figure appeared. It was human-like, with five appendages off the main body, two eyes, ears, a nose, a mouth, and hair. What was different, were the spikes in the back. As the figure became clearer, the spikes moved around, as if by their own free will. It had scaly skin, and dark green eyes. It wore an outfit similar to an extremely thin version of his Mjolnir Mk. VI suit. In a matter of minutes, the image began to speak.

"Greetings human, I am Fafnir, guardian of the Oracle. I have waited long for one to be worthy of leading humanity to safety. I am in the form of my creators, the 'Forerunner', as you call them. I have been in constant contact with the other monitors on other oracles, before one by one, each one 'dying' in a sudden explosion.

As of now, only I and another guardian exist, whose existence is

found only on a planet long dead, but still inhabited by the Forerunner's guards, the Sangheili. In your language, they are called the 'Elites.' It's a pity that so many of them have been misguided by the false prophets. The 'Prophets' used to be our blood, our flesh, before many of them had undergone a tremendous mutation. A few crazed Forerunner scientists wanted to live forever, and tried to find the one thing that could allow them to do it. However that is a topic for a later time. Right now, my sensors on the system of Halos are detecting the Flood gathering on multiple makeshift ships that have been pieced together from ancient ships which have crashed into the fortress worlds. You should begin preparation to leave Earth."

"What are you talking about?" objected Dr. Smith, "Our navy barely has enough ships to keep our planet from falling into the Covenant hands, let alone carry the entire human population to the Ark! What you're talking about is impossible, even if we were able to get a ship large enough to ferry our race!"

"A good argument, sir, but we are not talking about actually moving the population. I might have misstated about leaving Earth. Instead, what I meant was to prepare to move this planet to the Ark."

"Moving the planet! That is impossible, let alone probable. Think of the energy required, and the speed! There is nothing in existence that can generate enough power--"

"Enough! What you have to say is entirely valid, but remember this; some of your warriors have discovered the gravity-bending crystal on your planet, REACH. We have used that technology to move planets to form habitats for our grand-children to live, such as you. Do not doubt us, or our skill."

"Alright, but I have yet to see proof." countered the doctor, wandering off toward the warthog. As he was walking over, Mitchell saw a shadow of someone hiding near one of the mounds of dirt, and shouted,

"Doctor, stop!" The words had barely exited his mouth, when a humanoid creature leapt out and grabbed the doctor by the neck. He had scaly-green skin, scars, thin, muscular arms, legs, and fingers, and had evil, glowing red eyes.

"So, doctor, doing more 'digs' huh? I knew what you were always after, riches and fame! Ever since you heard that story of the 'glowing orb', you were fascinated and wanted to find it. So, look what we have here! A Spartan and an AI; How touching. Ready to meet the demise of the renowned 'doctor', or do you want to beg?" coughed the man, while his lungs quivered at each breath, as if the atmosphere was too thick for him.

"So, Doc, do you remember what you did to me at our dig site on Io? No? Than perhaps let me refresh your memory. You were younger then, perhaps more naïve. Your knowledge at the most basic guidelines was perhaps second to your massive ego. Your rush to find something that would pay off, led us to the center of one of the more volcanic areas. In your recklessness, a gush of heat from an active vent destabilized my flyer, and you let me fall into the vent. So, doctor, you probably left me to die, huh? Well guess what? A group of rebels found me; half charred and covered with third-degree burns. They healed me to the best of their abilities, but my lungs became used to

the thin atmosphere of Io, which helped my scarred lungs to heal faster. I'm here to have my revenge, and see you suffer ten times worse than what I have endured." The man smiled an evil smile as he whipped out a rusty but sharp blade, lifting it up to his neck, playing it around like a six-year old waving his hand in water, grazing his skin. A trickle of ruby-red blood flowed off his skin. He made a sudden motion to slit his throat, when he stopped, and sheathed it back in a pouch.

"However, I am willing to spare you, on one condition, that you bring me to this, 'crystal'. I have _special_ plans for it. Prepare to leave in an hour."

* * *

>END PART ONE!

**Hope you enjoyed this, but his ends the first part. ONWARD TO THE SECOND ONE! **

8. The Problems Spread

**1035 Hours, February 13, 2580 (Military Calendar) / **

**En Route to Camp Freetown, Edison, New Jersey **

"Attention Freelancer Bravo 521, you are required to transmit your ID code immediately."

"This is Sergeant Sonia Kamir, military code 596-9304-0395, returning from a scouting trip at Buffalo, New York; I hear that they're preparing for some assault or something. I got wind that some of our outposts in the Arctic have been hit, what's the situation on them?"

"Roger, code accepted, land on docking pad three. What you heard was true. You'll be debriefed when you land, see you on the ground."

"All right I'll see you, over and out." Sonia piloted her pelican transport toward the docking pad with a number 3 on it, touching down with a slight _thump_. She opened her cockpit door, which unsealed with a slight hiss. As she clanked down the Pelican's cabin, she could see that some of her team still hadn't left for their "vacation" The only ones left were Sarah Durante-her explosives specialist, Helen Sari- the medic, and Alicia Chang, her COMM officer. Their eyes all turned toward her as she walked past, but she ignored them. She had other things to see. As she passed the town's bar, she could hear raucous laughing and clinking of tankards. _That must be Ian Pennell and Dvahal Satha, drinking away their leave as usual, _she thought, smiling a little as she imagined what they would look like in the morning. She raced for the C.O.P, which was the Center of Personnel. Stopping before the attendee behind the desk, she started to catch her breath.

"Hello, how may I help you?"

"I would like to see if Doctor Alexander Smith is in right now?"

"Hold on pleaseâ€|nope, I'm sorry, but it seems that he left for Iceland a few weeks ago, on some sort of mission."

"Could you tell me what kind?"

"I'm sorry, but I can't. However, you are needed at the command center for debriefing." ended the attendee.

"Thank you, and have a nice day." curtly responded Sonia. Swiftly and suddenly, she turned around and headed straight for the Command Center.

**1125 Hours, February 13, 2580 (Military Calendar) / **

**Rutgers Airfield, New Brunswick, New Jersey **

"Attention unidentified vehicle, please stop your landing and transmit your designation and personnel code now. I repeat, please stop your landing and transmit your designation and personnel code." repeated Lieutenant Gregory "Flame" Higgins. He watched as a claw-shaped ship drifted down onto a landing pad.

"Traffic controller, this is Staff Sergeant Thomas Hunterson, ID code 937-5951-3547. I am coming down from orbit with a new ship for testing. We were given new ships from our new friends up high. Don't fire, though I would love to see what this thing's armor can take."

"Roger Sergeant, just make sure you don't press the wrong thing and shoot something explosive."

"Hoo-rah, See ya." He watched as the cockpit popped open and a man in green fatigues stepped out. He walked toward the nearest transport and popped open the hatch, crawling inside to wait for the clearance to leave. Suddenly, a shockwave rippled through the ground, shaking Gregory like a stone in a tumbler. While this occurred, a massive red portal appeared out of thin air and rendered everything near it into flames. He watched as buildings crumbled, and the doomed people near it were burnt to a crisp. While he sat, staring at all that had happened, the building he was in started to rumble and before he knew it, it cracked, and he fell down through the air with hundreds of pieces of wreckage. Just before he blacked out, he saw a slug-like creature, daggers for hands, and a head with two mandibles, and two, dark black eyes which was as dark as sin. It hissed and slithered away.

Message to Mitchell 316

Gaia

Warning: Transmission may not be complete

Your last mission was a success, but I have terrible news. #Pragma Nautical Redefined# efenders reported seeing the
> aliens lÂ\$moving a large cylindrical object.

#101111011110111100001# is is a '7'. Mjolnir Recon number 54
> must stop them from exploding igniting blowing up/ A94F12/
> i t the /macine, REploID #80 Ä,Ä,Äç0.0Äf.A Ä•Ä%Ä^à@'Î©
ÄÄ•ÊŽÄçÄ,Ä•Ä¥ÄfÄ„ÊŽ

** Data Transmission Unsuccessful **
> Rerouting

2-Fren. ie transfer. Partial cOmputEr&Ä, relay. Tycho. &Security
error.
> Ty93.2 !dead.<p>

Gaia Data Transfer Unsuccessful
> Gaia Program Pragma Ten
 **Communication interruption cause:
unknown**
> Pre-Recorded Error Message Follows<p>

My original programming didn't prepare me for these kinds of
> attackers. All of my functions will fail within a few minutes

of this transmission. I have one final chance to trick the
> oncoming viruses, but it is unclear whether this attempt will

be successful.

I have given instructions to Alicia as to keep the machine from the
hands of the covenant, but she is completely unstable and I fear that
she will betray us all. Go, find her. The last time I checked in with
her is 0543 at Edison, New Jersey.

Good Luck...I hope you succeed.

End Pre-Recorded
Message

**1348 Hours, February 13, 2580 (Military Calendar) /
**

**Archaeological Dig-site, Sector 9-A, Iceland **

Mitchell's COMM system started to beep consistently. He was following
orders from a pirate, which totally went against his feelings. As the
message title went across the screen, all he could see was ENJ,
repeating over and over. He put it in his storage, and continued to
wait silently. He could see the man standing over the doctor as he
piloted the Pelican dropship, with a gun pointed at his head.
Mitchell silently whispered to Juno about the course of action he was
about to take. He quietly stood up, and silently tip-toed toward the
monster. Suddenly, he sprinted and slammed the person onto the floor,
anchoring him down. The weaker man stared into his face-plate and
tried to head butt him, but not before he went down, knocked
unconscious. Mitchell stood up.

"Come on, we gotta get to New Jersey, it seems that the world is
about to endâ€|again."

**1350 Hours, February 13, 2580 (Military Calendar) / **

****Rutgers Airfield, New Brunswick, New Jersey ****

Pilot Tiffany "Rocky" Brett guided here SkyCarrier down through the atmosphere, cursing the mist.

"Air traffic control, this is Anaconda 529, reporting in for suppliesâ€¦I repeat, this is Anaconda 529, reporting in for supplies. Is anyone--" A sudden motion cut her off.

"Oh my god; what the hell happened here?" asked her co-pilot Ashley Frint, "it looks like someone use a HAVOC nuclear bombâ€¦waitâ€¦what's that red thing?"

"To be honest Ashley, I have no freaking idea. Maybe there are some survivors. We should go down and take a quick look."

"If you want, but I'm staying in here."

"Fine; just get us down there." As they glided down, the smoke that was covering the field vanished as a breathe of wind blew across, revealing founds of rubble, fields of some organic substance, small aliens moving around, and large mounds of membrane and organs in multiple sizes. Suddenly, one of the mounds burst, to have a large citadel of meat and spines, with creatures around it, and large egg-sacks with a round base.

"Holy --; What the hell happened down there? Isn't the security in this place on of the tightest around?"

"Ashley, you're right. You can see some fighting still going on, I think." Far off in the distance, she could see bright flashes of yellow light, followed by green splotches of color, then the sound of screams as the marines' flesh started to burn. They tried to switch their position, but by then, some buildings with flesh on them had already targeted them and launched yellow balls of spores. As one of them hit, nothing happened, but then a loud hiss was emitted from somewhere behind them. They looked back, and saw that the spores had just vaporized a section of the hull, and atmosphere was leaking.

"Shit, we're losing altitude. I think that one of the spores hit the wings! We have to keep evading!"

"No time, and we can't with our ruined wings, just aim for the landing pad, we'll do our best to --." stated Tiffany, but was cut off as she heard a large whine from the engine on the left side. They were diving toward the ground, no way to slow or stop, leaving fate to guide them to safety. They heard scraping of rock on metal, and all they heard before they blacked out was a large crunch.

****1349 Hours, February 13, 2580 (Military Calendar) / ****

****Rutgers Airfield, New Brunswick, New Jersey ****

Gregory "Flame" Higgins shook his head as he crawled out from underneath the rubble. He could hear the squelches of aliens mutating into a large, pulsating building, and the snarls of aliens as the squabbled over dead flesh and other debris. He heard a large roar as a transport veered from out of the clouds of smoke.

"HEY! OVER HERE! HELP ME!" screamed Higgins at the top of his lungs. The aliens five yards from him heard his screams, and started to slither forward him. He grabbed a battle rifle that had miraculously survived the fall and the rubble. He hefted it and started to fire slugs as fast as the rifle would allow. The slug-like aliens screeched as the high-velocity bullets tore through their skin, membranes, and carapaces.

"Get your head down, soldier, I'm firing a rocket." shouted a voice from no where. He hit the dirt, and dust flew around his face. a rather muffled _thump_ suddenly emanated from the general vicinity of the aliens. He looked up, and saw that the dropship took heavy fire and started to veer into the runway. He stood up and started to run, but something grabbed him, and started to squeal and grunt as it tried to pull him back. Screaming wildly, Higgins started to throw anything he could grab, distracting the creature long enough to have it release his feet and he ran off toward the downed dropship, as it skidded toward the portal and to certain doom.

End
file.